

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

August 19, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

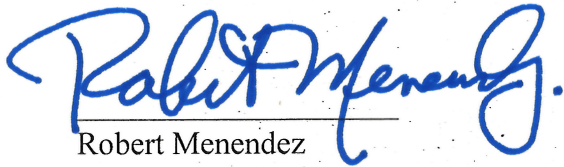
We write in regard to the ongoing concerns with the water quality in Newark, New Jersey and your ability as the Secretary of Agriculture to help mitigate any potential risks to which the City's residents may be exposed. As you may be aware, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently discovered levels of lead that exceed the applicable federal drinking water standard during tests of filtered water at Newark residences. This means that those most susceptible to lead poisoning - pregnant women and children under five - may have been exposed to dangerous levels of lead through their drinking water.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) are uniquely positioned to provide immediate assistance to Newark, the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) through the federal Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA). WIC, which is administered by the NJDOH, is already serving the populations most susceptible to dangerous lead levels: pregnant women and children up to age five. Additionally, WIC recipients in New Jersey are also eligible for food packages through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) through the NJDA. With this in mind, we request that you immediately take the following actions:

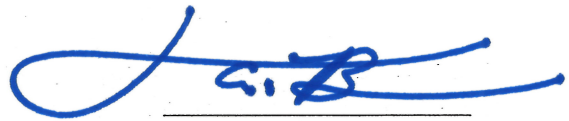
1. Allow the NJDOH to use WIC funds to conduct blood lead tests on WIC participants at WIC clinics in Newark.
2. Provide additional funding to NJDOH to open an additional and temporary WIC clinic in Newark to assist in immediately conducting these blood lead tests.
3. Use your authority to distribute the NJDA additional TEFAP food to already eligible households that contain foods rich in calcium, iron, and Vitamin C, which may help limit the absorption of lead in the body.

We appreciate your attention to this matter. Please provide a response no later than August 23, 2019.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Menendez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R".

Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cory A. Booker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C".

Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Albio Sires". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A".

Albio Sires  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Donald M. Payne, Jr.". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D".

Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress